IX. *Some Accounts of the* Fœtus in utero *being differently affected by the Small Pox.* *By* W. Watſon, *F. R. S.*

Read Dec. 7. 1749. THAT the human Species ſhould only once in their Lives be liable to the Small Pox, has long been obſerved with Surprize, both by Phyſicians and Philoſophers: Nor is it leſs extraordinary, that the Child before Birth, which in every Circumſtance is equally ſupported by its receiving and circulating its Mother's Fluids, ſhould be ſo differently affected by that Diſtemper.

From the Diſſections of thoſe who have died of the Small Pox, we find that the *Viſcera* are ſubject to the variolous Abſceſſes as well as the Skin; but that the *Fœtus* does not always partake of the Infection from its Mother, or the Mother from the *Fœtus*, is the Subject of this Paper.

About four Years ſince I attended a young Man, a Servant to a Carpenter, who had a very putrid and offenſive kind of Small Pox; of which nevertheleſs he recovered. His Miſtreſs, during his Illneſs, came frequently into his Room, and ſometimes continued there a conſiderable Time. She was then about ſeven Months gone with Child, but had had the Small Pox herſelf many Years before. At the uſual Time ſhe was delivered of a Girl, whom I ſaw very ſoon after its Birth: and there appeared very plainly the Marks of about forty Puſtules, in different Parts of her Body. From this Appearance I then inform'd the Parents, that I apprehended the Child

would hereafter be very ſecure from the Infection: But as about a Month ago the Parents thought proper to have a little Boy of theirs inoculated, I requeſted that they would permit the before-mentioned Girl to be inoculated likewiſe. As I deſired, they were both inoculated, from a Child of my own, who had, from Inoculation, had a favourable Kind. Upon the tenth Day after the Operation the Boy ſickened, and had the Small Pox, very favourably: About the ſame Time the Girl grew pale, and loſt her Appetite. This Indiſpoſition continued for two or three Days, and then ſhe recovered.

In both theſe Children, the Inciſions, which were made only in one of their Arms, were extremely ſuperficial, and inflamed in both as uſual: That in the Boy produced the variolous Fever and its Attendants, as is before-mentioned; but in the Girl occaſioned only a Paleneſs and Loſs of Appetite without a Fever, and one variolous Abſceſs in one Part of the Inciſion, ſuch as is ſometimes ſeen in Nurſes, and in thoſe who have attended Perſons in the Small Pox, who have had it themſelves before. This one Puſtule was a ſufficient Argument of the variolous Matter taking Place, and endeavouring to excite the uſual Symptoms.

Dr. *Mead* in his learned Treatiſe concerning the Small Pox takes Notice of a Woman's attending her Husband, who, a ſhort Time before ſhe expected her Delivery, was ill of the Small Pox. As ſhe had undergone the Diſtemper herſelf a conſiderable Time before, ſhe felt no Inconvenience therefrom; but upon her Delivery the Child was found dead, and its Body covered with the Small Pox.

Theſe

Theſe two Hiſtories evince, that the Child before Birth, though cloſely defended from the external Air, and enveloped by Fluids and Membranes of its own, is not ſecure from the variolous Infection, though its Mother has had the Diſtemper before. They demonſtrate the very great Subtility of the variolous Effluvia; as we find them capable either from their floating in the Air, and by their being taken in by the Inſpiration of the Mother, or by penetrating the abſorbent Veſſels upon her Skin, and thus mixing with her Blood, of exerting their Effects upon the Child: And we may obſerve further from the firſt of theſe Caſes, that it is poſſible for the Child to live through the Small Pox before its Birth; as well as that after that Period under the before-mentioned Circumſtances it is not liable to the Infection again.

The following Hiſtory is equally remarkable with the preceding.

A Lady of high Birth and Quality now living, well known to ſeveral Members of this learned Body, had the Small Pox to a great Degree when ſeven Months gone with Child; notwithſtanding which ſhe went her Time and was delivered of a Son, who did not appear to have upon his Body any Marks of the Diſtemper. As this Lady had been ſeverely handled by the Small Pox, it was judged that her Child would never after be liable thereto; nevertheleſs when about four or five Years old, he was attacked with the Diſtemper, but got very well through it, and is now alive.

A Caſe in ſome reſpects reſembling this laſt is taken Notice of by *Mauriceau* *, who delivered a Woman of

* See *Mauriceau ſur les maladies des femmes groſſes*, Caſe 576.

of an healthy Child at her full Time, who during the fifth Month of her Geſtation had had the Small Pox to a great Degree; although the Child, from any Marks of its Body, did not appear to have been affected with the Diſtemper.

Theſe Caſes are the very Reverſe of the former; where though from Inoculation the moſt minute Portion of Lint, moiſtened with the variolous Matter and applied to the ſlightly wounded Skin, is generally ſufficient to propagate this Diſtemper; yet here we ſee that the whole Maſs of the Mother's Blood, circulating during the Diſtemper through the Child, was not ſufficient to produce it.

It generally happens, as we are informed by medical Writers, and as I myſelf have ſeen in Practice, that if Women are delivered during the Courſe of the Small Pox, the Diſtemper of the Child does not keep Pace with that of its Mother, but is ſubſequent thereto. Thus the Child of the Lady, mention'd by the learned Dr. *Mead**, who was brought to bed on the eleventh Day, when labouring under a very malignant Small Pox, was born without any Appearance of the Puſtules; but on the fourth Day after its Birth the Child was ſeized with Convulſions, and died at the Eruption of the Small Pox. And in a Woman, whom I attended, and who was delivered of an apparently healthy Child upon the ninth Day of a diſtinct Small Pox, the Child was not ſeized until the eighth Day after its Birth, which is about the Time that the Infection would have taken Place, if it had been received from any other Quarter, independent of its Mother's having the Diſtemper before its Birth.

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* Vide *Tract. de Variolis*, pag. 66.

From theſe Hiſtories it appears, that the Child before its Birth ought to be conſider'd as a ſeparate, as a diſtinct Organiſation; and that, though wholly nouriſh'd by its Mother's Fluids, with regard to the Small Pox, it is liable to be affected in a very different Manner, and at a very different Time, from its Mother.

X. *The Caſe of* Nicolas Reeks, *who was born with his* Feet turned inwards, *which came to rights after being ſome time uſed to ſit croſs-legged. Tranſmitted from* Wm. Milner, *Eſq*; *at* Poole, *to Sir* Peter Thompſon, *Knt. F. R. S.*

Read Dec. 7. 1749. *Nicolas Reeks* was born in the Town of *Poole*, 1724. with both his Feet turn'd inwards. His Mother carried him to a Surgeon, who upon Examination gave it as his Opinion that he was incurable. The Boy, as he grew up, was with great Difficulty able to walk, but always on the outward Edge of his Feet and Heels, ſo that he frequently fell down in walking, one Foot ſtriking againſt the other.

His Parents being poor, in 1735. the Pariſh put him Apprentice to Mr. *Richard Mocket*, of the ſame Town, Taylor, apprehending it the only Trade he could be fit for as a Cripple. His Shoes were made in a peculiar manner to lace on to his Legs, the Muſcles